

Journey into Nature

a Spiritual Adventure

by Michael J. Roads

I am unashamedly proud to be able to review what I unbiasedly consider one of the most important books available to humanity today.

To recognise that we are one with nature, is a concept many of us can intellectually grasp, but how many KNOW it?

This book truly stands alone in its field. Many books have covered how to look at nature, but none have covered how to BE nature.

The author of this book is a guy I can personally vouch for - his is both my father and my friend. He is no more special than you or I, and yet he is as special as you and I.

I have selected a piece from the book as my review, and being in a position to indulge, I picked a piece dealing with an issue, and a dog, who was as close to my heart as the author's.

Duncan Roads - Editor

Becoming Animal

Two strong hands held me briefly around the middle - and then pushed. I hit the water with the sound of wind chimes ringing in my ears. Surprise! They continued chiming while I swam underwater! I came up laughing.

Together, we sat on the old bridge board. I gazed at his faery beauty with deep appreciation, while his golden eyes regarded me with amusement and affection.

"Nothing has changed, you realise." There was concern in his voice.

"I'll do what I have to do. I guess it's a case of either trust you or quit. And I know I couldn't quit!"

"You have to go back into the experiences of your own connections with animals. It may be rough, but there is no other way. Your path to Beyond requires that you journey into the consciousness of Nature. You must experience Nature's metaphysical per-

spective and accept it. You must learn to let go of emotional attachments, becoming as free and unencumbered as the breeze." He laughed. "That's all!"

I swallowed in apprehension. "As you probably know, I had another really bad episode with a dog. I had to shoot my much loved Great Dane, Whisky. She was ailing with a cancer. I chose to shoot her rather than call in a vet. Now I wish I hadn't." My eyes misted over at the memory. "When I recall her life, there are so many things I could have done better."

This time I could see compassion in Pan's eyes.

"Don't you feel in retrospect that you could have done many things better? Relating to people, for example?"

"Oh yes, I do, but I don't feel guilty about that."

"Why?"

I sat for a while thinking it over. "I think it's because I view people as being responsible for themselves and for their own actions, but domestic animals are the responsibilities of their owner, as is their behaviour."

I felt comfortable realising this, and for a while there was silence as we watched the river sweep past with soft, hesitant gurgles.

"Pan. Do I have to experience the Whisky trauma?"

His voice was level, calming. "Only you can decide. If it is resolved within you, then it is finished; if not . . ."

"If not, then I'll find it all happening again." I winced at the thought. "And there's nothing I can do to prevent it. What a prospect."

I felt shaky. "Will you be with me when I journey out?"

"Yes, but as Spirit. I cannot help you. I cannot change anything. You are totally responsible. You determine whether you will suffer or not. You are the experience."

For an eternity I encircle the planet. It all seems familiar, a planet I have visited many times. Slowly, without any sense of time, my consciousness becomes more solid, taking on form. In many, many separate bodies, I roam the Earth, but gradually my focus becomes one single animal. I am a dog. I experience my self as separate, yet my awareness of connecting with the All is ever present. There is only Now. Thoughts of soon or late are nonexistent. Within the Now, beyond any need of thought, I am connected. I am a large dog, a Great Dane, and I live on a farm in the foothills of Mount Arthur in Tasmania.

I experience my years of puppyhood by eternally playing with the children who live on the farm. I live in the house with the family, spending the winter evenings on a rug before a blazing fire. I am loved, and that love is part of my connection with life. I need love; I thrive on it. To be stroked and patted is rapture. The vibration of my owners' Being is transmitted by touch. Their love is as vital to my well-being as food.

When I am full grown, something dreadful happens. I am dismissed from the house! I no longer sleep on the rug before the fire. I feel that I am shamed, but no punishment for misdeed is inflicted. Nobody tells me why I am banned from the house and garden, but it happens.

I am given a new bed in the soft hay in the hay barn. I lack nothing in comfort, and if the evenings are more chilly it does not greatly concern me. What festers within me is the lack of stroking and touching on which I thrive. But I cannot reflect on such matters. I live what is. If something is missing, it is missing for all time.

I grow older, less capable, while the children on the farm become stronger and more capable. My special attention is always focussed on the master of the farm. A look of love from him lights me up; a frown of anger devastates me. That he loves me is apparent. I can read his energy as easily as I can read any human energy. Humans are an open book. Emotions play out in streams of energy around them, signalling their intentions long before they act. Sometimes, visitors to the farm are deeply repulsive to me, but this is rare. Many fear me because of my size, but fear is their constant companion; I only externalise it. This I know, because in the Now their energy broadcasts their feelings to all Nature. Humans cause me fear and pain, love and joy. A fearful human is fear, transmitting the emotion to me and the other dogs. We snarl in rage, hating the vibration, and the fear grows stronger.

Love is my life. To love and be loved is my purpose, and I know this with every atom of my Being.

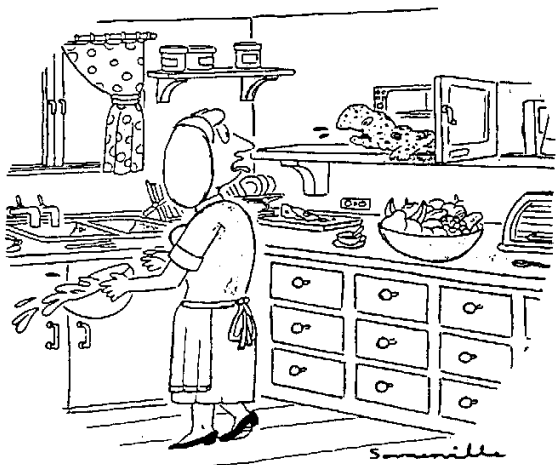
The disquiet I feel at being removed from the house is never in my head, but it is me. I become that energy. The ruling never has to be enforced. Once removed, I know the rule but never why. I am never tied up. I have freedom. The whole farm is mine to roam, but the house and garden are banned.

As I grow older, an ache develops in one of my front legs. Gradually, it becomes a deep-seated pain, not intense but an endless throbbing. I limp, and this is difficult on my long, rather clumsy legs.

I ail, moving less and less frequently from my snug bed in the hay barn. I see less of the children, and this also becomes a pain. I see far less of my master as well, for his work consumes his time. Only when he feeds me do we physically connect. I deteriorate rapidly in health and condition. One day my master comes to me, and I know he carries my death. The distress emanating from him is terrible, and my fear for him is paramount.

Suddenly, there is duality. I am dog, suffering from a growth in my leg, and I am master, crying as I hide my gun behind me.

He wraps his arms around my neck, and I feel him shaking in anguish. And I am my master, as, wrapping my arms around Whisky, I cry with what I have to do.



"Don't be alarmed, I'm the mushroom quiche you left to microwave and forgot six days ago!"

I watch, unresisting, as he levels the gun at me. I know it kills, for I have seen it in action. I know he is going to kill me, but I have no fear. I have no knowledge of death. I am dog. I live, I love, I bark, I die. None of these are separate.

I am the man, shaking with contained grief as I take aim between the eyes of the trusting dog. I see those limpid eyes of devotion gazing into mine, and I can hardly hold steady. Taking a deep breath, I squeeze the trigger.

I gaze into those blue human eyes, and my love pours forth. Abruptly there is a tremendous explosion. I am no longer in pain, no longer contained by an ungainly body. I am light, free, spirit of dog, loving my human master. I gaze at him as he holds the bloodied head of my dead body. I try to lick the tears from his face. I want him to know that I bear no grudge, but he is unaware of me. I want him to know that I love him, that death is only a movement in life, one I have experienced many, many times. But all he feels is grief ... and something else.

I hold the shattered head of Whisky and let the grief pour out of me. My thoughts hold only one phrase: if only, if only! If only I had let her live in the house with us. Why did I allow such petty issues to change things? So she knocked the children over with her great size. So what? Did they ever complain? So she left a large pool of saliva on the lounge floor where she slept! How trivial it now seems. I cry, cradling her head in my arms, her blood mingling with my tears. And I feel the guilt of my failure. As a dog owner, I have failed, and my guilt is a pain.

"Failure and success are illusions. As long as you measure yourself in terms of success or failure, you will remain unenlightened."

"Only you judge yourself. Nothing else in life does this except humans. Humans judge themselves and each other. Give it up..."

Pan

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